

My name is Michele Lavery and I am the Director of the Ag Science Center in Modesto, CA. I am here today speaking on behalf of our board of directors and am pleased to present our view of the vision, challenges and opportunities for the future of this industry.

Our vision for agriculture

By 2030 California Agriculture will be recognized as the source for safe and healthy foods for our state, nation and the world. Agriculture will be seen as **the** career field of choice for the best and brightest students exiting our schools. Students will understand that agriculture is a dynamic industry in which advanced scientific knowledge is essential to undertake the multitude of careers that help keep California the world's leader in food production.

Educators without regard to grade level, school location or demographic will include agriculture in all aspects of their curriculum from DNA to dissections, bugs to biographies of agricultural leaders and water use to welding. Teachers will regularly invite farmers, ranchers and the environmental community to participate in classroom presentations to highlight the essential working relationships between these groups that have resulted in California becoming the leader in environmental stewardship with agriculture leading the charge.

The future vision for agriculture in California will encompass a passion for agricultural education which includes all grade levels and subjects. 4 H and FFA will continue to excel in producing dynamic leaders for the future of the industry. Career and technical education will be highlighted and ample funding will be available to ensure students can explore diverse career options as a part of their educational experience.

What is our challenge?

In order to achieve this vision the agricultural industry must develop a single voice in support of agricultural education at all levels from elementary to career and technical education, community colleges and on to veterinary schools. The industry must articulate a clear, shared vision for the inclusion of agriculture into all levels of curriculum development in all subjects. Through the development of a shared vision for ag education the industry will be a more effective voice for funding and curriculum development.

It is essential that our state's education system see agriculture as an integral part of all aspects of the education of our youth and not as simply a placeholder in third grade history books or the reason a school needs a farm. Industry leaders need to be as focused on promoting the technical needs of the industry to leaders in education as are those who head up Silicon Valley corporations.

Public perception in 2030

Agriculture will be seen as the leader for both the "green movement" and the driving force for setting and maintaining the highest educational standards in the areas of science, math and

career and technical education. Ag education will be perceived as the place to go to learn cutting edge science and essential mechanical skills.

By consistently setting the highest standard for educational excellence in science, math and career and technical education and therefore producing high quality, outstanding job applicants for the diverse spectrum of careers needed to support growing, highly scientific, green industry agriculture will be perceived as the career field for the best and brightest students. We will change the perception of farmers and agriculturalists from those who chose this industry as a fall-back career to an industry which competes for the top graduates in all disciplines.

Agriculture will be perceived as the leaders in food safety, health and nutrition in addition to planetary preservation and resource management. Agriculture will be a sought-after player in all policy level discussions regarding land and resource use as the general public will understand and appreciate the crucial value the industry plays in feeding not only our citizens but the world.

A “Must Have” for the future

California is the leader in agricultural production. To maintain that status we must focus on all aspects of the industry’s educational needs. It is essential that our state’s education system see agriculture as a key to our state’s future not a door to the past. Through the development of projects such as the Ag Science Center which unite the agricultural industry with the latest scientific practices this industry will continue to be the driver for our state’s economy well into the future.

The must haves are:

- A clear focus by leaders in agriculture for the direction of ag education
- Inspiring leaders in our state’s educational and governmental sectors to embrace the vision of the role agricultural education plays in the future of our state as an economic and social leader
- Unanimous and unconditional support for projects such as the Ag Science Center, Ag in the Classroom, 4H, FFA, Career and Technical education and community college agricultural programs which inspire, educate and train the leaders of our industry, state and nation

Thank you for taking the time to focus on the future of this essential and dynamic industry. As our population grows more focused on the safety and nutritional value of the food they eat there is no better time to focus on the health and longevity of our industry as a whole. I would be pleased to answer any questions you have.